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ABSTRACT

Education policies of the European Commission and the Council of Europe stress the importance of cultural and language diversity. A white book by the European Commission on education and training recommends that every European citizen be able to communicate in at least 3 of the 12 officially recognized languages of the European Union by the end of high school. Simultaneously, there has been a major move toward using English within the 15 member states of the European Union. Against this backdrop, mother tongue teaching and learning as well as foreign language teaching/studying/learning are confronted with many new situations. Teacher education must provide the ability for prospective teachers to acquire the professional competence necessary to deal proactively with this phenomenon. This paper uses Finland and Sweden as examples of developments within the European Union, presenting various solutions in teacher education which have been adopted in these Nordic countries. Solutions include teaching more foreign languages and teaching them earlier; providing immersion programs; providing bilingual education; and teaching old minority languages as new school subjects. The paper examines the cognitive benefits of multilingualism and discusses trends in language teaching and learning in Nordic countries. (Contains 43 references.) (SM)

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Struggle for Diversity of Languages in a Harmonising European Context – New Tasks for Teacher Education

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Abstract

Education policies of the European Commission as well as of the Council of Europe stress the ultimate importance of cultural and language diversity. The prominent White Book of the European Commission on education and training "Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society" (1995) has made the recommendation that every European citizen should be able to communicate in at least three out of the twelve officially recognised languages of the European Union at the end of upper secondary schooling. At the same time an enormous process of harmonisation towards the use of the English language may be detected within the fifteen Member States of the European Union. Against this background mother tongue teaching/learning as well as the teaching/studying/learning of foreign languages are confronted with a number of (new) situations.

Teacher education has to provide learning environments for (prospective) teachers in which they may acquire professional competence necessary to deal pro-actively with this phenomenon. In a comparative perspective and taking Finnish and Swedish contexts as examples for developments within the European Union the paper will bring to discussion a number of solutions taken in teacher education which have been adopted in these Nordic countries.

1. A brief historical overview

Europe has always been multilingual. This means that there have always been

- a large number of languages,
- multilingual persons and
- a potential need to learn other languages.

In the history of European foreign language teaching/learning different periods can be found. Firstly, the Romans studied Greek and the language of teaching was Greek. Latin took the place of Greek during the expansion of the Roman Empire. Latin then became the language of the academic discourse in Europe for some 1400 years till the early 19th century. It still occupies an important role in the Catholic church.

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The need to know more than one European language has always been important in European societies, e.g. in the army, the economy or in the social communication. To give an example: in the 16th century in Sweden the learning of German, French and Dutch was seen as a noble exercise, like dancing, fencing or horse riding, not necessarily related to science and knowledge like Latin or Greek. The teaching/learning of English at secondary level became a school subject in the 19th century. (Cf. Cabau-Lampa 1999, I. Buchberger 1999)

A 'language tournament' in Europe has taken place in this century between French, German and English. While German and French – once the predominant language of diplomacy - lost much of its importance, English became increasingly importante since the Second World War (cf. Cabau-Lampa 1999, I. Buchberger 1999).

The study of foreign languages at school has been a privilege of the youth of higher social classes until the second part of the 20th century. The goal of instruction has not been the native speaker's competence or bilingualism, but teaching and learning, more or less, an academic language.

The idea of "nation states" became predominant in Europe since the 17th century and the 19th century may be seen as the century of nation states (cf. the foundation of Germany or Italy). National myths, national poets and composers have been invented. National languages have been established, and schools took an important role in teaching these. In doing so schools contributed to national standardisation and a reduction of diversity.

Although the European Union has been established in 1992, its member states are all still nation states. In these nation states usually one national language - in a few only two languages - have the status of an official language as mother tongue. These official languages are taught

- more as cultural subjects
- with national (not to say nationalistic) values
- than as pure languages for communicative purposes;
- in most cases this gives an essential difference to foreign language teaching/learning.

On another side many old "minority languages" in Europe (e.g. Catalan in Spain, Lapp in Nordic countries) have been taught neither as a mother tongue for the native speakers of these languages nor as a foreign language to the children of the majorities. Only recently most of these languages have got the status of "minority state language" and are taught at school as home language or as mother tongue.

Today languages in the European Union have different status:

- The status of so called community languages is highest. All official documents of the European Commission have to be translated into these twelve languages and the discussions in Commission assemblies have to be interpreted into these twelve languages. The near future this will apply to eighteen official community languages including e.g. Slavic languages (Czech, Polish) or Hungarian.
- The community languages can have different status in different Member States of the European Union. E.g., Finnish and the minority language Swedish are both official national languages in Finland with the same status. In Sweden Finnish is a minority language and has the status of a "home language".
- There are old minority languages with official minority language status in one or more European states (e.g. Lapp in Finland, Sweden, Norway) and non-Community languages with different status (Estonian as "home language" in Sweden), or immigrant and foreign languages(e.g. Russian in Finland).

2. Europe is increasingly becoming multilingual

Especially after World War II Europe has become an object of great immigration from different parts of the world. This has implied that the number of languages spoken in Europe has increased dramatically, even in counties which have been rather homogeneously.

Again, Sweden and Finland will be taken as examples for developments detectable in a comparable way in a number of European countries. Prior to World War II Sweden was a homogeneous population both ethnically and linguistically. The situation has changed dramatically so that by the late 1990s there were over a million resident immigrants, which is 12 percent of the countrys' population. (Boyd 1999)

Labour migration was dominant from the late 1950s through the 1970s. After labour migration has come to an end around 1973, the 'family-tie' migration has kept the figures high during since. The birth of "the second generation" in Sweden has changed the demands minorities have placed on Swedish society as regards education, social services or opportunities to practice non-Christian religions. (Boyd 1999)

Sweden has also received refugees during the entire post-war period. During the first half of the 1990s Sweden granted asylum to between 12 000 and 45 000 people annually, since 1995 for only 5000 annually. (Boyd 1999)

In the compulsory school 12 percent of the children report that a language other than Swedish is regularly used at home. Over half of these more than 100 000 pupils receive instruction in their mother tongue (L1) and almost as many instruction in Swedish as a second language (Sw2). Both of these subjects have their own official curriculum. (Boyd 1999)

The situation in Finland is developing into the same direction as in Sweden. In Finland the official languages are Finnish, Swedish and in some parts Lapp. About 5 million inhabitants speak the Finnish language as their mother tongue. The Finnish language belongs to the Finno-Ugric languages, which means that it has no kindred languages within the European Union.

Swedish is the mother tongue of around 300 000 inhabitants and Lapp of around 17 000. The Romany minority, who speaks Romany as mother tongue, has around 7000 members.

During the last years many immigrants have come from Russia, Estonia and Somalia. Russian is the mother tongue of 30 600 people, Estonian of 9 300 and Somali of 5 300. In addition, English is the mother tongue of 5 900 persons. Recently there are speakers of some 120 different mother tongues in Finland. (Nuolijärvi 1999)

At the same time the percentage of the Finnish speaking population has increased as former speakers of minority languages have become bilingual or Finnish speaking (Wildén 1999).

The amount of immigrants has been low compared to Sweden. However, some parts of the former homogeneous Finland are rapidly becoming multilingual and multicultural. The multilingual population is concentrated along the coast and the metropolitan area. This is also the area to which the inner immigration in Finland is concentrated. The eastern and the northern parts of Finland are becoming more empty – and monolingual.

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At the same time the number of English speaking people has dramatically increased in Finland. Kids are frequent users of the internet making use of the different "internet-Englishes". Big enterprises have adopted English as working language.

3. Europe will remain multilingual

The European Commission, the Ministries of Education of its Member States and the Council of Europe may be seen as major players in the field of language policy in Europe. While concrete language policies of the Member States of the European Union differ to a certain extent – from pro-activity towards extensive diversity to rather monolingual policies -, the European Commission and the Council of Europe follow a quite similar aim – diversity and plurilingualism.

The Council of Europe was established by 10 countries in 1949. It was the first international organisation founded in Europe after the Second World War. Today it has 41 members states. Its main role is to strengthen democracy, human rights and the rules of law throughout its member states. The Council of Europe is also active in enhancing Europe´s cultural heritage in all its diversity.

One focus of the Council of Europe is education. The Council of Europe has for long run cross-European projects focusing on the transmission of democratic values to young people and to prepare them for life in a multilingual and multicultural Europe. (CE 2000a)

For one of its cross-European projects, the "Modern Language Project" the Council has defined objectives, such as:

- to promote large-scale plurilingualism by assisting member states in encouraging all Europeans to achieve a degree of communicative ability in a number of languages and to continue their language learning on a lifelong basis;
- diversifying the range of languages on offer and settings appropriate objectives for each language;
- improving the education and training of language teachers and promoting learner-centred, communicative methodologies. (CE 2000a)

The latest large project of the Council of Europe "Language Policies for a Multilingual and Multicultural Europe" (1997-2000) had the following aims:

- to help national authorities to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism and to increase public awareness of the part played by languages in forging a European identity;
- to develop ideas, approaches and strategies to promote linguistic diversification and to improve the quality of language learning and teaching;
- to promote language learning from the very start of schooling, making every pupil aware of Europe´s linguistic and cultural diversity;
- to develop further and apply common European reference instruments for planning and assessments of language learning, mutual recognition of qualifications and co-ordination of politics (Common European Framework of Reference, European Language Portfolio and 'threshold levels');
- to elaborate instruments and co-ordinate networks for the design and implementation of modular courses;
- to develop further the intercultural dimension in language learning and teaching;
- to disseminate information of the results of the project. (CE 2000)

The European Commission is following a very (pro-) active language policy focusing on diversity:

- English and French are its two working languages.
- Ten further languages have the status of officially recognised community languages.
- Special programmes have been established for the teaching and learning of community languages (cf. LINGUA).
- The protection and (re-) cultivation of minority languages may be seen as another priority of concrete language policies of the European Commission.

- While the Treaty of Maastricht (1991), the quasi-constitution of the European Union, has restricted the responsibility of the European Commission in education matters and redistributed decision taking power to its Member States, the European Commission exerts its power in education and training matters in an "indirect way" submitting different kind of recommendations, Green Papers and White Books as well as cross-European action schemes (cf. F. Buchberger 1998, Novoa 1996).

One of the most influential item may bee seen in the recommendations contained in the White Book "Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society" (1995). Its recommendations on language teaching and learning may be summarised as follows:

- Every European Union citizen should be able to use three community languages (after completion of secondary).
- Another aim is (community) language learning "as early as possible".
- These will improve the quality of language and intercultural learning and promote a more balanced language ecology.
- The increasing language competence increases mobility and this way it gives also better possibilities for seeking jobs in different Member States of the European Union.

The Council of Europe and the European Commission have declared 2001 as "European Year of Languages". The reason is that Europeans should become more aware of the need to develop reasonable competence in several languages. (Sheils 1999). The argument is clearly for diversity. The increase in the scale and quality of language learning has been concentrated on the English language, and this fact is perceived as problematic by education policy makers. Restricting foreign language learning to ensuring a common knowledge of English as a universal second language might erect barriers to young Europeans' appreciation of the rich cultural diversity of the continent and full participation in the cultural life of different countries. (Trim 1999). Therefore, it is important to promote the learning of less widely used or taught languages (Sheils 1999).

An Eurobarometer survey conducted by the European Commission (1997) has reported that in 1990 60% of young people (15-24) in the European Union countries were able to speak a language other than their mother tongue at a level "well enough to have conversation". By 1997 the percentage had increased up to 71,3%. One reason is that in the three new Member States of the European Union very high percentages were recorded:

- Sweden (97,4 %),
- Finland (96 %) and
- Austria (68,1 %).
- The ability to use English (53,7 %) as a second language is far in advance of French (19,9 %), German (11 %). and Spanish (8,7 %) (Trim 1998).

4. The information highway and English

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In 1994 the European Commission received a report of the Bangemann Group. The recommendations of this report point to the need for the development of information networks and their basic services, and innovative applications of telematics. Based on these recommendations, the European Commission has submitted a work program called "Europe: Towards the Information Society", started a huge action scheme (Joint Call Multimedia) and launched only recently (Council of Ministers, Lisbon 2000) another new large scale action scheme to materialise this.

M. Warshauer and D. Healy have provocatively written: "We have used to ask ´what is the role of information technology in the language classroom´. The question might be more ´what is the role of the language classroom in the information technology society´.

Preparing students to learn in the network society will become a major task of language instruction. This will most certainly be true for the English language classrooms, with English likely to remain the lingua franca of the new global society." (Warshauer & Healy 1988). Answers to this provocative question raised by Warshauer and Healy are still missing.

The use of information and communication technology in the European Union is most common in Nordic counties, and extraordinary high even when compared to international figures. However, coherent discussions on the integration of English language teaching/studying/learning with multimedia education have still to be missed both in cultural contexts making intensive use of information and communication technology and English language teaching (e.g. Nordic context) and in other countries. (Sinko & Lehtinen 1998, 1999; REPORT 1999)

5. Scandinavian languages and English

The Scandinavian languages Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic are kindred languages. When you master one of these, you can easily learn to understand the others. In Nordic discourses the Finnish speaking Finns have usually used Swedish and the people of Iceland Danish or Swedish.

There have been lively discussions on the future of national Scandinavian languages both before Denmark, Finland and Sweden have joined the European Union and afterwards. Recently the English language is getting the position of the second language in Scandinavian countries and is replacing the existing Nordic lingua franca, which is a bled of Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. The Finnish speaking Finns increasingly make use of English instead of the Nordic lingua franca when speaking with other Scandinavians. But even Danish and Swedish people prefer to use English more often in Nordic discussions. (Ewert 1998)

In many multinational enterprises (e.g. Nokia) the English language has become the official working language. Internet texts, e-mails, youth magazines and advertisements are full of loan words and phrases from English. (Louhia-Salminen 1999) Additionally, for everybody English is an everyday listened/spoken language in TV because films and programmes are presented undubbed.

6. More foreign languages and earlier

All Scandinavian languages (Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, the two Norwegian languages, Swedish) are spoken by a limited number of persons (a little bit more than twenty millions) around the world. Considering that this number is split up again into six different languages this fact seems to be the main reason that particular attention is given to foreign language teaching/studying/learning in the Scandinavian context.

Regarding foreign language teaching/learning Finland has frequently be seen as a "model state". The following figures may underline this statement:
At the primary level of comprehensive education (age 7-12) all students have to study Finnish and one foreign language.

- Even primary students may chose a second foreign language as an optional subject.
- At lower secondary level of comprehensive education (age 13-15) all students have to study two foreign languages.
- They can opt for a third foreign language as an elective subject.
- At upper secondary level (age 15-18) students may opt for a fourth foreign language.
- In addition, a foreign language may be used as language of instruction in studying different other (school-) subjects both at comprehensive school level and at upper secondary level. In most cases this instruction is provided in English.

For most of the Finnish students the first foreign language is English (1997-98, 83,3 %) and the second language is then the obligatory other domestic language Swedish (or for the Swedish speaking students Finnish). The third foreign language selected by the students usually is either German, French or Russian.

It is worth mentioning that in Finland two foreign languages have been compulsory subjects in the national curriculum since 1970, when as a result of a major school reform a comprehensive school system has been introduced.

In Sweden English was made a compulsory school-subject already in 1962. Recently English instruction starts form the first year of schooling on at the age of seven. The teaching/learning of a second foreign language has been made compulsory in 1994 compulsory, starting at grade 6. The students can chose between German, French or Spanish. The learning of a third foreign language is voluntary.

Making provision of rich language programs is seen by a large number of observers as an enormous enrichment – and to a certain extent as a certain counterbalance against an Anglo-American linguistic hegemony.

7. Some Nordic language teaching/learning development projects

Against the background outlined Nordic countries have been pro-active to tackle the situation described in a large number of research and development projects. Four of these will be described briefly.

7.1 Immersion programs

Immersion is a form of bilingual education in which students, whose first language (L1) is usually spoken by the majority of the population in a country, receive part of their subject-matter instruction through the second or foreign language (L2) and other parts through L1 (Genesee 1987). The first experiments were made in the Canadian province Quebec in 1965. English-speaking parents wanted that their children learn more adequate French to be able to compete for jobs in a province where French was soon to be adopted as the sole official language. Parents had reservations about enrolling their children into francophone schools. Immersion programs have since been developed to teach various languages in wide range of contexts around the world. (Lyster 1999; McGivern & Eddy 1999)

In Finland the first immersion projects have been started in 1987. Recently already 3000 children study in immersion classes and the amount of students is increasing. The new school legislation has given more autonomy to the particular schools and municipalities running the schools to realise models of their own. The demand of immersion classes has exceeded the supply. Additionally, there is a permanent lack of teachers competent to teach immersion classes.

Most of the children have Finnish-speaking parents who want that their children learn Swedish which is the other official language in Finland. In some cases the immersion language is English or German. Some Swedish-speaking parents have chosen Finnish immersion.

The model adopted is usually the "Canadian". The Swedish instruction begins in kindergarten at the age 3-5. During the first 3-4 school years the Swedish language is used as a medium of instruction in subject-matter classes. In the Finnish language instruction the cultural dimension and aspects of literature and art are emphasised. The L2-teachers ought to be bilingual and they give instruction only during the immersion lessons. While teachers follow the pattern mentioned before, students can use L1 at the beginning.

Research clearly indicates that the language development of students taught in immersion classes as well as their other academic achievements are at the same good level in both L1 and L2. In addition this result applies to their affective development (Laurén 1998, 1999; Laurén & Vestbacka 1990; Mård 1998; Björklund 1998).

A number of reasons may be made accountable that The National Board of Education (an executive organ at the central administration level) is concerned about the results of instruction in mother tongue and the development of the Finnish cultural identity of children in immersion groups (Opetushallitus 1999). Immersion is not yet seen as an effective part of the language policy of the European Commission.

7.2 Bilingual Education

The term bilingual education refers to the teaching/learning of content through a foreign language (TCFL). Teaching content through a foreign language has a double focus:

- content mastery and
- language development,

leading to some degree of bilingualism.

TCFL differs from immersion in that only a selected number of school subjects will be taught in the target language and that the support for the target language from outside school may be lacking. In addition, the methodology of TCFL is less strict. (Sjöholm 1999, 28)

In Finland TCFL is used in schools at lower and upper secondary level and at higher education level. The target language used is in most cases English. E.g., universities have increased study modules in English for both foreign and Finnish students. (Tella, Räsänen & Vähäpassi 1999)

TCFL can be understood also as a dual-language program (Brisk 1999). Minority language students receive instruction both in their mother tongue in groups comprised of students of their own linguistic background and also in majority language groups. This procedure aims at additive bilingualism. Immigrant students should be able to develop two languages. This is the regular model of teaching immigrant children in Scandinavia. (Boyd 1999)

A third version of TCFL may be described as a "two-way program" (Brisk 1999). The students are instructed in both Finnish and Russian and the presence of native speakers of both languages (Finnish children and Russian immigrant children) helps for second language development.

In most cases TCFL is used to strengthen the status of English. Different two-way models could provide opportunities to use the language potential of many immigrant groups to increase the multilingualism in Scandinavian societies.

7.3 Old minority languages as new school subjects

In the European Union there are around 50 minority languages. Following the principle of language diversity the European Commission has started a new program for minority languages (Archipel). (Korsström 1999)

As regards Sweden, the European Bureau for Lesser Languages (EBLUL) has counted Meän kieli (Our Language) as one of the European minority languages. This Finnish dialect is spoken in Northern Sweden. It has received the status of an official minority language in Sweden in 1999 and also the status of an obligatory school subject in some schools in Northern Sweden. (Korsström 1999)

Most Finnish observers find this way to strengthen the European linguistic diversity odd. (Korsström 1999)

7.4 European language portfolio

One of the language projects of The Council of Europe is the European Language Portfolio (ELP). The European Language Portfolio is a personal document in which everyone can record his/her qualifications and other significant linguistic and cultural experiences in an international transparent manner. It should become a useful and practical tool to provide efficient comparison of language qualifications. (CE 2000a)

The European Language Portfolio will consist of three parts:

- a passport recording formal qualification in an internationally transparent manner,
- a language biography describing language knowledge and learning experiences, and

- a dossier in which the leaners´ own work can be included.

The Portfolio may be continuously be modified and will be updated as the owner´s language learning progresses and develops.

Different formats have been tested in a number of pedagogical contexts in different European countries, e.g in Finland. (CE 2000b)

8. Cognitive benefits of plurilingualism

The European discussions on plurilingualism have two levels: the macro-level and the micro-level. At the macro-level the main idea is diversity: foreign language learning can not be restricted to common knowledge of English. Europe should remain multilingual, and all Member States both of the European Union and the Council of Europe have taken responsibility, in principle, to increase multilingualism.

At a micro-level new cognitive theories and the results of brain research emphasise the cognitive benefits of plurilingualism and the new teaching methods in teaching/studying/learning foreign languages. In addition, it is worth mentioning that in most European countries important mass media are supporting the language policy mentioned and have contributed to a better understanding of new insights of cognitive and brain research. (Cf. GEO 1999; Spiegel 1997)

Old theories on the effects of bilingualism can be described as follows: The picture portrays the monolingual as having one well filled balloon inside the head. The bilingual is pictured as having two less filled or half filled balloons. As the second language balloon is pumped higher, so the first balloon diminished in size. (Baker 1996, 145; Sjöholm 1999, 21)

This naive theory of early research has been criticised by Cummins (1980, 1984) and Baker (1996). At first, the evidence shows that there are cognitive advantages rather than disadvantages for being bilingual. Cummins describes the old theory as the ´Separate Underlying Proficiency Model of Bilingualism´ (SUP). In contrast he calls the new orientation as ´Common Underlying Proficiency Model´ (CUP) and presents it in the form of two icebergs. These two icebergs, which represent the bilingual´s two languages, are separate only above surface but fused underneath the surface. So CUP is understood to be the same central processing system for two or more languages. Cummins speaks also about more involved language skills and uses the term Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The bilingual education seems to develop CUP. (Baker 1996, Sjöholm 1999)

The results in brain research - how multiplied languages are represented in a human brain - seem to support partially the CUP theory. The representations of the early and late bilingualism are different. In functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to determine the spatial relationship between native and second language in the human cortex shows that within the frontal-lobe language-sensitive regions (Broka´s area), second language acquired in adulthood are spatially separated from native languages. However, when acquired during the early language acquisition stage of development, native and second languages tend to be represented in common frontal areas. (fMRI 1999)

This means that an early bilingual instruction would be optimal. The results from immersion experiments give support that this kind of bilingual instruction will bring about better results.

9. Trends in language teaching/learning in Nordic countries

If it holds true that teachers should be able to do, what is expected from students, then all European teachers should be able, to communicate in three Community languages. Although most teachers in Nordic contexts can fulfil this requirement, it remains debatable how these teachers may be able to provide powerful learning environments for students to acquire language competence. Things seem to be more complex, especially when the relations between mother tongue teaching/learning, minority language teaching/learning and foreign language teaching/learning have to be considered. "Simple answers" may not be expected the near future.

9.1 Language repertoires are becoming more individual

Legislation governing education systems has increased the autonomous decision-making power of municipalities and schools. Possibilities of parents and students have increased to chose different languages. As a result differing individual multilingual profiles comprised of a number of language competencies may be expected inside the formal education system. The position of minority languages may be improved within this profiles. Individual Language Portfolio may get increasing relevance.

9.2 Differences in linguistic competencies are increasing

European Union students in general and Scandinavian students in particular increasingly spend more and longer study periods abroad in other European Union Member States. As a result both the amount of linguistic competence and the individual differences in language competence are increasing dramatically. A need for new systems of assessment has been expressed (cf. Language Portfolio).

9.3 Language teaching is increasingly becoming content teaching

Bi-/trilingual teaching/studying/learning is becoming more usual as a regular format. More subjects and/or contents of school will be taught making use of different Community languages. In addition, the rapidly increasing use of information and communication technologies mainly based on different "internet Englishes" in (school) education has impact on content teaching/studying/learning. This calls for new and enlarged language competencies of teachers.

9.4 The standards of "national" languages change rapidly

Comparable to other European minority languages the Finnish and Swedish languages have seen changes in two ways:

- At first, the languages are changing as systems. The influence of English can be noticed at all levels of these languages: in their vocabulary, in grammar, in pronouncement and in orthography. Regarding Finland decreasing results in national evaluations on achievements of students are seen by some observers in relation to changes of the language structure (cf. Opetushallitus 2000, Buchberger, I. 2000).
- At second, the way of using standard language is changing. E.g., situations where the use of standard language is expected have decreased and different dialects are now used also in more

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or less official situations in speech and texts. The national languages are loosing status also as a language of publications. A large number of scientific reports produced in Nordic contexts is nowadays usually published in English. (Buchberger, I. 1999)

Mother tongue teaching in schools is seeking for a new role. E.g., in Finland the name of the school subject "mother tongue" has been changed into "mother tongue and literature" underlining the meaning and/or relevance of national culture in the school curriculum.

9.5 Will English become the Nordic lingua franca?

The official languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. Until now Swedish has had a status of obligatory language in all Finnish schools. The situation will probably change during the coming years. How such a change would impact on the political and cultural relations in Finland and in Scandinavia may be seen as an unresolved problem and open questions.

This unresolved problem and the open questions do not only apply to the Nordic context. These seem to be a problem with which most European countries are confronted. But, aren´t these global problems (cf. Phillipson 1992, DeVillan & Sugio 1999, Skutnabb-Kangas 1999)?

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